

Research funding application process

Steps for research team

Develop a research question; perform a literature review

- Develop a search strategy and search electronic resources for completed and ongoing systematic reviews and primary studies, guidelines, policies
- Review evidence to: outline what is known/unknown about the problem; ensure novelty; refine and justify question; inform methods; describe current practice/pathways
- Ensure idea is academically sound, important and practicable within the health & social care system
- Present a strong case for the research, drawing on the literature and clinical knowledge

Consider the funding programme

- Read research programme webpages, director's messages

Build the team and alert organisations

- Form a team with the relevant breadth of expertise, taking account of funding limits
- Liaise early with departments impacted by research and with organisations responsible for costings, sponsorship, study planning and support

RDS Support - contact us early

RDS advisers can;

- Advise on the literature review (search and appraisal)
- Help you to translate an idea into a focussed question
- Consider whether the question is presented as novel, adequately justified, ethical, feasible to address in the time period
- Help you to plan and facilitate public involvement activities and identify individuals & groups to work with

RDS advisers can

- check the proposed study is within scope of the targeted funding programme, or help to identify an alternative
- advise on the requirements of funding programmes

RDS advisers can

- identify gaps in the team
- help source potential co-applicants
- Signpost to organisations that will provide essential support

Other organisations / people to contact

- Ask institutional librarian to help with literature search
- Discuss and refine question with;
 - colleagues
 - public involvement contributors (service users, national charities, [INVOLVE](#), special interest groups)
 - Clinical Research Network (CRN) speciality groups
 - ± Clinical Trials Unit (CTU)
 - NHS and social care partners: commissioners, providers and research office

- Contact funding programme manager if in doubt over remit: send a carefully drafted 1-2 page summary of the proposed project

- Contact potential co-applicants, collaborators and departments impacted by planned research
- Request support from organisations in good time; their early involvement in planning and costings is essential e.g.:
 - commissioners, providers, research offices (NHS Trust, CCG, University), intellectual property (IP) manager
 - CRN ([CRN Study Support Service](#))
 - CTU if appropriate
 - Health Enterprise East (HEE) if appropriate

Steps for research team

Decide on study design, develop methods

- Consider where project sits in developmental pathway (e.g. intervention development, feasibility study, pilot followed by full scale study)
- Consider practical, ethical and regulatory aspects
- Consider methods e.g. sampling, recruitment, outcome measures, analysis, process evaluation
- Develop a public involvement plan, agree role descriptions
- Plan inventive ways to disseminate research findings

Write the research proposal

- Look at successful applications
- Follow the application guidelines carefully
- Create a Gantt chart
- Ensure co-applicants comply with any requirements e.g. providing online CVs

Confirm costings and seek approvals

- At an early stage, consult CRN and sponsor to ascertain the required timelines for obtaining sign off
- Provide sufficient detail about the study to permit accurate costings by relevant organisations
- Consult [AcoRD](#) document
- For single stage and stage 2 applications only, complete Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool ([SoECAT](#)) with sponsor and CRN AcoRD expert

Submit research application and deal with panel feedback

- Respond to panel feedback from stage 1
- Generate and submit stage 2 application if applicable
- If unsuccessful, consider next steps
- Please send a copy of submitted stage 1 and 2 applications to RDS
- Please send a copy of any panel feedback to RDS

RDS Support - contact us early

RDS advisers can

- provide guidance on methods and signpost to an array of methodological resources
- point you to regulatory resources such as the MHRA guidance on Clinical Investigations of Medical Devices
- help you to develop your plans for continued public involvement throughout the lifespan of the project: this is essential for developing a study that is inclusive, practical to deliver and clearly described

RDS advisers can

- review drafts at any stage
- attend research team meetings, including meetings with fellowship advisors
- Inform you about other peer review opportunities: RDS bid development workshops and pre submission panels

RDS advisers can

- consider the cost implications of your research design and help to identify ways of maximising value for money
- tell you who to contact for costings and approvals

RDS advisers can

- go through the panel's feedback with you and help to plan a way forward
- arrange a mock interview if required

Other organisations / people to contact

- Continue to review requirements as the methods evolve
- Seek any additional methodological and operational input (e.g. from statistician, health economist, qualitative, CTU, CRN, NHS managers, clinical departments impacted by research, public involvement contributors)

- Request peer review of your application within your institution and from public involvement contributors
- Share application with involved organisations e.g. research offices, IP manager, CTU, CRN, HEE

- Work with, and seek approvals from relevant organisations in good time ahead of submission, including director of finance, head of department/senior manager, NHS and university research offices, CRN, CTU if involved

- Discuss panel feedback with co-applicants, public involvement contributors, CTU, research offices, CRN
- Work with these groups in developing stage 2 application (if applicable)
- Inform public involvement groups about the outcome of the application and the next steps

Note, the above process is not linear, there are various feedback loops and some parts happen in parallel.

